

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 05755 01 OF 03 030733Z
ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00
/028 W

-----016940 030755Z /11

R 030600Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5805

INFO AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 5755

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: ETRN ENGR ET

SUBJ: ETHIOPIA'S TRANSPORT SITUATION

REF: A. STATE 216911 (NOTAL) B. ADDIS ABABA 4671

C. ADDIS ABABA A-083 D.ADDIS ABABA A-016

E. ADDIS ABABA A-010 F. C-ER-7-51239

1. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION HAS BEEN DERIVED OVER THE
PAST TWO WEEKS FROM A NUMBER OF ETHIOPIANS AND LOCAL
FOREIGN NATIONAL RESIDENTS.

2. TRAFFIC ON KEY LAND ROUTES.

A. MASSAWA TO ASMARA. CONVOYS RUN AT THE RATE OF
THREE PER WEEK. THIS ROUTE IS VULNERABLE TO INTER-
DICTION AND POSSIBLY REMAINS OPEN ONLY AT THE SUF-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ADDIS 05755 01 OF 03 030733Z

FERANCE OF THE INSURGENTS.

B. ASMARA TO ADDIS ABABA. ROUTE BETWEEN ASMARA AND
MEKELLE IS NOT NOW OPEN TO EPMG.

C. MASSAWA TO ASSAB. ROUTE IS NOT NOW OPEN TO EPMG.

D. ASSAB TO ADDIS ABABA. CONVOYS LEAVE ASSAB EVERY THREE DAYS. THE AVERAGE SIZE OF THE CONVOYS IS 150 TRUCK/TRAILERS, EACH CAPABLE OF CARRYING 20 - 22 TONS OF CARGO. MOST CONVOYS ARRIVE INTACT IN ADDIS ABABA, WHERE THE CARGO IS BROKEN DOWN BY ULTIMATE DESTINATION AND FURTHER DISTRIBUTED BY TRUCKS, RAIL AND AIRPLANE. A FEW CONVOYS PLIT UP EN ROUTE. CARGO PREFERENCE IS PREDETERMINED BY EPMG OFFICIALS. ONE SOURCE INDICATES THAT PREFERENCE ALLOCATIONS GENERALLY ARE AS FOLLOWS: COMMERCIAL GOODS - 7 PERCENT; INDUSTRIAL GOODS - 25 PERCENT; FOODSTUFFS AND FERTILIZER - 33 PERCENT. THE REMAINDER IS FOR FUEL AND MILITARY CARGO. OTHER SOURCES INDICATE THESE PERCENTAGES ARE SUBJECT TO WIDE VARIATIONS DEPENDING UPON NEEDS. CONVOYS ARE SUBJECT TO UNSURGENT ACTION, BUT IN FACT WE NOW AWARE THAT ANY CONVOY HAS BEEN ATTACKED FOR MANY MONTHS. ONE BRIDGE WAS APPARENTLY BLOWN BY INSURGENTS EARLY IN SEPTEMBER, BUT TRAFFIC HAS NOT BEEN INTERRUPTED. THE LATEST ESTIMATE BY AN OIL COMPANY OFFICIAL INDICATES TRUCKS ARE MAKING 3.8 TRIPS PER MONTH.

E. ADDIS ABABA TO DIRE DAWA. MILITARY CONVOYS ARE STILL GETTING TO DIRE DAWA. HEAVY COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC PLIES FROM ADDIS ABABA AS FAR AS AWASH.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ADDIS 05755 01 OF 03 030733Z

F. ADDIS ABABA TO NAIROBI (VIA AWASSA AND MOYALE ON THE KENYAN BORDER). ROUTE HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN INTERDICTED BY SHIFTA ACTION AND IS USED ONLY SPORADICALLY SOUTH OF AWASSA, AND THEN USUALLY UNDER MILITARY CONVOY.

G. OTHER. FROM ADDIS ABABA TRAFFIC AS FAR SOUTH AS ARBA MICH AND TO THE WEST IS UNIMPEDED; TRAFFIC TO THE NORTHWEST BEYOND GONDAR IS SUBJECT TO INSURGENT ACTION. THE NEW ROAD SPUR FROM DJIBOUTI TO THE ASSAB-ADDIS ABABA ROAD IS USED ONLY SPORADICALLY (REPORTEDLY ON THREE OCCASIONS SINCE JUNE). THIS IS DUE BOTH TO SHIFTA (BANDIT) ACTIVITY AND TO THE INABILITY OF DJIBOUTI AND ETHIOPIA TO AGREE ON HOW THE TRANSPORTATION IS TO BE ORGANIZED. (I.E., WHO CONVOYS WHAT WITH WHICH TRUCKS, DRIVERS, ETC.).

3. RAILROAD TRAFFIC. RAIL TRAFFIC BETWEEN ADDIS ABABA AND AWASH CONTINUES. BETWEEN THAT POINT AND DJIBOUTI THERE ARE SEVEN BRIDGES DESTROYED. ATTEMPTS TO REBUILD THE BRIDGES HAVE BEEN ABANDONED.

4. AIR TRAFFIC. ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES (EAL) OWNS 10 DC-3'S, 5 BOEING 720'S AND 2 BOEING 707'S (ONE OF WHICH IS ON LEASE TO AIR INDIA). THE DC-3'S CONTINUE TO CARRY COMMERCIAL CARGO AND SOME PASSENGER TRAFFIC AMONG THE MORE IMPORTANT ETHIOPIAN TOWNS, INCLUDING ADDIS ABABA, ASMARA, ASSAB, GONDAR AND DIRE DAWA. FROM TIME-TO-TIME, THEY ARE PREEMPTED FOR MILITARY USE. (MAXIMUM CARGO CAPACITY OF THE DC-3 HAS BEEN SET BY EAL AT 25,000 LBS.) THE 707, AMONG OTHER USES, CARRIES CARGO BETWEEN ADDIS ABABA, DIRE DAWA, AND DJIBOUTI. DAILY FLIGHTS TO DJIBOUTI WERE DISCONTINUED ABOUT 10 DAYS AGO, ALLEGEDLY DUE TO JET FUEL SHORTAGES THERE (POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 ADDIS 05755 01 OF 03 030733Z

ON THE PART OF DJIBOUTI MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED). THEY ARE SCHEDULED TO BE RESUMED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. EAL CURRENTLY HAS 29 CREWS TO MAN THEIR SIX JETS, INCLUDING SOME FOREIGN NATIONALS. THE HIRING OF ADDITIONAL FOREIGN PILOTS AND ENGINEERS HAS BEEN VETOED BY THE EPMG FOR SECURITY REASONS. EAL IS WORKING HARD TO QUALIFY ETHIOPIAN PERSONNEL FOR THESE JOBS.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 05755 02 OF 03 030742Z
ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00
/028 W

-----017012 030757Z /16

R 030600Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5806
INFO AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 5755

NOFORN

5. SEA TRAFFIC. ETHIOPIAN SHIPPING LINES (ESL) OWNS FOUR VESSELS; CARGO STEAMERS OF 6,000 DWT, 7,000 DWT, AND 9,000 DWT, AND A TANKER OF 3,000 DWT. THE TANKER IS PRESENTLY OUT OF COMMISSION DUE TO A FIRE. REPAIRS TO MAKE IT SERVICEABLE WOULD COST SOME US DOLS 1.5 MILLION, WHICH THE EPMG FINDS PROHIBITIVE. ESL HAS ON CHARTER THREE OTHER SMALL COASTAL VESSELS OF 1,200 DWT, 1,500 DWT AND 1,700 DWT. ESL'S ONLY SCHEDULED CONFERENCE ROUTE IS BETWEEN ASSAB AND WESTERN EUROPE'S NORTHERN PORTS. PRIOR TO THE HALT OF RAIL TRAFFIC FROM DJIBOUTI, AND THE INTERDICTION OF THE ASMARA - ADDIS ABABA LAND ROUTE, THERE WERE SOME SIXTY SHIPS MONTHLY BRINGING CARGO TO ETHIOPIA. OFFLOADING WAS DIVIDED ALMOST EVENLY AMONG DJIBOUTI, ASSAB AND MASSAWA. MOST OF THESE SHIPS, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF NON-SCHEDULED SHIPS CARRYING PRIMARILY MILITARY CARGO, NOW ARE ROUTED TO ASSAB;

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ADDIS 05755 02 OF 03 030742Z

ONLY A FEW ARE BEING OFFLOADED IN MASSAWA. (IT IS NOT KNOWN IF ANY SHIPS ARE STILL OFFLOADING IN DJIBOUTI CARGO FOR ETHIOPIA.) MOST OF THE GOODS STRANDED AT DJIBOUTI WHEN THE RAILROAD WAS CUT NOW HAVE BEEN TRANSHIPPED BY SEA TO ASSAB, OR TRANSPORTED TO ADDIS ABABA BY AIR. (REPORTEDLY TWO STEVEDORE FIRMS IN DJIBOUTI RECENTLY WENT OUT OF BUSINESS FOR LACK OF WORK.)

6. ASSAB PORT FACILITIES. AT PRESENT ASSAB IS CAPABLE OF BERTHING SIX TO EIGHT SHIPS AT ONE TIME. DUE TO LACK OF PORT CRANES, VIRTUALLY ALL LOADING AND UNLOADING IS DONE WITH SHIP CRANES. THE DAILY AVERAGE TONNAGE PER HATCH HANDLED IS 200 TONS. IF NOT SACKED, DRY BULK CARGO MUST FIRST BE SACKED BY HAND BEFORE UNLOADING. AN AVERAGE OF 1000 TONS PER DAY OF BULK CARGO CAN BE UNLOADED THIS WAY. TOTAL ANNUAL HANDLING CAPACITY OF ASSAB PRESENTLY IS ESTIMATED TO BE 250,000 - 300,000 TONS. DESPITE RECENT EXPANSION, VIRTUALLY ALL AVAILABLE STORAGE SPACE IS CRAMMED FULL. LACK OF PORT HANDLING EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS FORKLIFTS, HAMPERS PROPER STORAGE AND MOVEMENT WITHIN THE PORT AREA. AT PRESENT THERE IS A DELAY OF 10 - 15 DAYS IN BERTHING. SOME SHIPS NOW ARE BEING ROUTED INTO MASSAWA, WHICH IS BEING

USED AS A STORAGE POINT FOR SUBSEQUENT TRANSSHIPMENT
BY SEA TO ASSAB. THERE IS A SUBMARINE OIL PIPELINE
BELONGING TO SHELL IN ASSAB HARBOR, BUT IT NEEDS
EXTENSIVE REPAIRS BEFORE IT CAN BE USED. SUCCUMBING
TO EPMG PRESSURES, SHELL IS CONSIDERING PLANS TO
IMPROVE THE PIPELINE, BUT THIS TASK WILL TAKE
SEVERAL MONTHS. MEANWHILE, BECAUSE OF SHALLOW
DRAFT NEAR THE REFINERY JETTY, ONLY SMALL TANKERS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ADDIS 05755 02 OF 03 030742Z

OF ABOUT 2,000 DWT CAN OFFLOAD IN ASSAB. THIS

USUALLY NECESSITATES A TRANSSHIPMENT FROM LARGER
TANKERS, A COSTLY AND TIME-COMSUMING PROCESS.
PORT CONGESTION IS ADVERSELY AFFECTING ETHIOPIAN
EXPORTS AS WELL AS IMPORTS.

7. ROAD TRANSPORTS. ADDIS ABABA'S A-010 AND A-083
INDICATE THERE ARE PROBABLY AT LEAST 3,500-4,000
SERVICEABLE COMMERCIAL HEAVY DUTY TRUCKS (10-12
TONS) IN ETHIOPIA. IN ADDITION THERE ARE SOME 2,000
TRAILERS (12-TON). THE GOVERNMENT OWNS ANOTHER 400
HEAVY DUTY TRUCKS -10-12 TONS). THE AVERAGE AGE
OF THIS HEAVY DUTY FLEET MAY BE 10-12 YEARS. THERE
ARE AN ESTIMATED 1,500 SMALLER TRUCKS IN SERVICE AS
WELL AS ABOUT 380 TANKS TRUCKS W/TRAILERS (EACH
INDIVIDUAL UNIT HAS A CAPACITY OF 13,000 LITERS)
USED EXCLUSIVELY TO TRANSPORT PETROLEUM. THERE ARE
IN ASMARA SOME 400 HEAVY DUTY TRUCKS AND 32 TANKERS.
ALTHOUGHT THEY ARE MORE NEEDED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE
COUNTRY, THESE TRUCKS ARE KEPTIN ASMARA FOR MILITARY
PURPOSES. THERE ARE SOME 850 TRUCK/TRAILERS ASSIGNED
TO THE ASSAB TRANSPORT DISTRICT. THE OTHER THREE
TRANSPORTATION DISTRICTS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE ASSIGNED
FROM 400 TO 600 HEAVY-DUTY TRUCKS. ACCORDING TO THE
GEN. MGR. OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION CORP.,
THE GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY
OF SPARE PARTS TO KEEP THE ROAD TRANSPORT FLEET
OPERATING EFFECTIVELY. (OTHER SOURCES DISPUTE THIS.)

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 05755 03 OF 03 030753Z

ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00
/028 W

-----017100 030755Z /11

R 030600Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5807

INFO AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 5755

NOFORN

8. FUEL SITUATION. EXCEPT FOR JET A-1 FUEL (AND POSSIBLY A SMALL AMOUNT OF AV-GAS), THE ASSAB REFINERY IS ABLE TO MEET ETHIOPIAN REQUIREMENTS EVENT TODAY. GASOLINE IS RATIONED, BUT THIS IS DUE MORE TO DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS THAN LACK OF SUPPLY. ENOUGH JET B FUELS IS PRODUCED TO MEET CURRENT MILITARY AND EAL DEMANDS. (EAL USES APPROXIMATELY 300,000 LITERS PER WEEK OF JET B. BY LANDING AT ADDIS ABABA WITH MAXIMUM LOAD, EAL HAS REDUCED LOCAL CONSUMPTION TO ABOUT 150,000 LITERS PER WEEK.) THERE HAS BEEN A STRAIN TO MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE FLOW OF JET A-1 FUEL TO FOREIGN CARRIERS FLYING INTO ADDIS, BUT AGAIN THIS HAS BEEN LARGELY A DISTRIBUTION PROBLEM, NOT A SUPPLY PROBLEM. WITH THE EXPECTED ARRIVAL IN OCTOBER OF MIG'S FOR THE AIR FORCE, THE DEMAND FOR JET A-1 WILL INCREASE CONSIDERABLY. ARRANGEMENTS ARE ALREADY BEING MADE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ADDIS 05755 03 OF 03 030753Z

BY THE EPMG TO OBTAIN INCREASED SUPPLIES OF JET A-1 TO MEET THIS HIGHER DEMAND.

9. FUTURE OUTLOOK.

A. ROAD TRANSPORT. CIVILIAN PURCHASES OF TRANSPORTS DID NOT INCREASE IN THE PAST YEAR AS EXPECTED, LEAVING THE GOVERNMENT FAR SHORT OF THE VEHICLES REQUIRED TO MEET EXPANDING NEEDS. BELATEDLY THE GOVERNMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO FILL THE GAP. RECENTLY

A TEAM SENT TO EUROPE WAS ABLE TO ACQUIRE FROM FIVE SEPARATE SOURCES A TOTAL OF 200 BADLY NEEDED HEAVY DUTY TRUCKS WITH TRAILERS. 120 ARE FIATS AND 80 ARE MERCEDES BENZ. CASH WAS DEMANDED AND PAID. ESL IS ARRANGING TRANSPORTATION AND IS CONFIDENT THE NEW TRUCKS WILL ARRIVE IN ASSAB BEFORE THE END OF OCTOBER. PARTS FOR ANOTHER 100-150 HEAVY DUTY TRUCKS (10TONS) THIS WEEK ARRIVED AT THE FIAT ASSEMBLY PLANT IN ADDIS ABABA. MAXIMUM TRUCK PRODUCTION AT THIS PLANT IS ABOUT 20 UNITS PER MONTH. ALL PRODUCTION HAS BEEN PREEMPTED BY THE EPMG. A DETAILED STUDY OF ROAD TRANSPORTS ON HAND AND FUTURE NEEDS IS CURRENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN BY NATRACO, TO BE COMPLETED IN LACT OCTOBER. UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE LOCAL UNDP REP IS A PLAN TO ESTABLISH IN ETHIOPIA A UN-CONTROLLED FLEET OF TRUCKS FOR FOOD DISTRUBTION. ALTHOUGH THE TRUCKS WOULD BE USED STRICTLY FOR UN (LARGELY WFP) PURPOSES, THIS PLAN, IF EFFECTED, WOULD, OF COURSE, HELP TO ALLEVIATE EPMG'S DISTRUBTION PROBLEMS.

B. SE TRANSPORT. ESL IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ADDIS 05755 03 OF 03 030753Z

ISSUING TENDERS FOR TWO SPECIALIZED ROL-ON ROLL-OFF VESSELS. THESE VESSELS WILL BE ABLE TO CARRY CATTLE AND BOTH GENERAL AND FROZEN CARGO. THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE FROM AWARD OF TENDER TO DELIVERY WOULD BE 12 MONTHS. PLANS TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PORT AT ASSAB ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION.

C. AIR TRANSPORT. EAL STILL HAS UNDER CONSIDERATION THE PURCHASE OF SEVERAL ADDITIONAL PLANES. PLANS TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE AIRFIELD AT ASSAB MAY ALSO BE REVIEWED.

D. RAILROAD TRANSPORT. INDICATIONS ARE THAT ONCE THE IN-COUNTRY SITUATION IS BACK TO NORMAL, ETHIOPIA WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO HAVE THE ROAIL LINE BETWEEN ADDIS ABABA AND DJIBOUT RESTORED AND IMPROVED. THE FIRST STEP, OF COURSE, WILL BE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH DJIBOUTI TO THIS EFFECT.
TIENKEN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HIGHWAYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS05755
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770359-0977
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197710100/aaaadgys.tel
Line Count: 380
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f65aa423-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 216911, 77 ADDIS ABABA 4671, 77 ADDIS ABABA A-83
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 734826
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ETHIOPIA'S TRANSPORT SITUATION
TAGS: ETRN, ENRG, ELTN, EWWT, ET
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f65aa423-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009